

Taking Charge: First Steps to Quitting

There are seemingly countless benefits to quitting smoking...

A smoke-free life means you will no longer inhale the hundreds of toxins found in tobacco products, which include ammonia, cyanide, and lead. When you quit smoking, your heart rate and blood pressure begin to return to normal. Quitting significantly reduces your risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, lung cancer, and some other cancers. Your sense of taste and smell can improve once you stop smoking. Quitting frees up the money previously spent on tobacco products for other uses. Quitting can make you feel more in charge of your health and your life.

Undoubtedly you can add to this list even more personal benefits. However, even though you may know how beneficial it would be for you to quit, you face the challenge that many smokers face, which is that you are not sure where to begin. Here are some key steps for quitting once and for all:

Make the decision to quit.

This can be a difficult step. You're likely to have mixed feelings about quitting, which is natural.

Know why you want to quit.

When you have good reasons they can motivate you to stick with your plan.

Write down your reasons for quitting. Writing your reasons down can make them more real. Keep your

reasons somewhere that you will see them daily, such as on your computer monitor, your medicine cabinet, or even the places where you used to keep your cigarettes.

NEXT STEPS: ACTIVELY QUITTING

The National Cancer Institute's Smokefree.gov suggests using the acronym "**START**" to help you remember the steps to help you quit successfully. "**START**" stands for...

Set a date to quit.

This gives you a clear goal and gives you time to prepare.

Tell family, friends, and coworkers of your plan to quit. This can provide support and motivation to stay with it.

Anticipate and plan for the challenges you'll face while quitting. This helps you prepare for the moments when you might get derailed by outside circumstances (like undue stress).

Remove cigarettes and other tobacco products from your home, vehicle, and work space.

Talk to your healthcare provider about getting help to quit.

You can work together as a team for strategies and support options for quitting.

A tobacco-free life can make a world of difference for both you and your loved ones, so why not begin today. Tobacco cessation counselors are available for free one-on-one support at www.FOH.hhs.gov/QUIT. □



The Yoga Push-up: Making the push-up more challenging

There are many challenging weight-bearing aspects of yoga that can help build muscle. One such exercise is the yoga push-up, which is sometimes used as a transition between positions.

The yoga push-up expands on the regular push-up by adding a “down dog” position. This engages more muscle groups, which adds to overall upper body strength.

STEP 1: EXHALE IN “DOWN DOG”

With the yoga push-up, breathing is important. It will facilitate the movement and keep you focused. The exercise begins in the “down dog” position with an exhale. This is a position where you make two sides of a triangle with the body. The goal is to have your weight distributed evenly between your hands and feet. The spine is long and the heels are reaching towards or touching the floor, depending on your level of flexibility.

For many, getting the heels to the floor may not be possible. The goal in yoga is to be pain-free while extending the body, so be sure to take it easy on your calf muscles while trying to get your heels to the floor. Lengthening of your muscles is what matters; not achieving the perfect finished position.

STEP 2: INHALE AS YOU CHANGE TO “PLANK”

Next, you will inhale as you move your body into a “plank” position. For this you will make your body like a stiff board with a straight line from the top of your head to your heels.

STEP 3: EXHALE AS YOU LOWER TO A PUSH-UP

Exhale as you lower to the classic push-up position, with your shoulders directly over your hands.

STEP 4: INHALE TO “UP DOG”

Inhale as you extend your spine forward with a slight arch to open the upper chest area. In this position, it is important to think of lengthening the spine more than arching the back. The thing you want to avoid especially is crunching the lower back. If you are familiar with yoga, this move is similar to a “cobra” only your legs are not touching the ground.

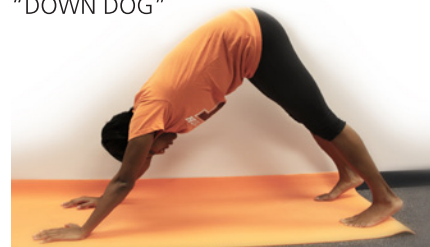
REPEAT CYCLE

Finally, exhale back to “down dog” and continue the cycle. “Down dog” is your resting position, so if you’d like to take an extra breath... or two...

A NOTE ON SAFETY

Whether practicing yoga or any form of exercise, the first rule of safety is to always listen to your body. If you begin to feel pain or that an exercise is overly strenuous, stop and make any necessary adjustments. In addition, before undertaking any exercise routine, be sure to check with your healthcare provider to determine the types of exercise that are most appropriate for you. □

STEP 1: EXHALE IN “DOWN DOG”



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STEP 4: INHALE TO “UP DOG”



Coping with a Diagnosis of Serious Illness

Reactions to learning of one's illness can be varied, ranging from shock to relief, and everything in between.

There is little that can prepare one for being diagnosed with a serious illness. Even when symptoms have been present for a long time, the confirmation of a diagnosis can be upsetting.

While shock may be the first reaction to learning your diagnosis, denial is also common, as are anger and grief over the loss of health. Some people become unconcerned about what goes on around them, while others may sleep, cry, or withdraw into themselves. These reactions are completely natural.

Research shows that after getting a diagnosis, many people have some of the same reactions and needs. If you or a loved one is faced with a diagnosis of serious illness, there are some strategies to help you cope with your diagnosis, make the decisions you need to make, and, hopefully, find peace of mind.

Take the time you need.

Do not rush important decisions about your health. In most cases, you will have time to carefully examine your options and decide what is best for you.

Get the support you need.

Explore with your healthcare team to find ways to get counseling or support. Depending on the seriousness of the diagnosis, you may need a lot of support, and from more than one source. Of course, friends and loved ones are the first line of support, but there's also personal counseling sessions and support groups. Support groups with people going through a similar experience can be informative and reassuring. You may want to start with your Employee Assistance Program at work for referrals to sources for support.

Talk with your doctor.

Good communication with your doctor can help you feel more satisfied with the care you receive. Research shows it can even have a positive effect on things such as symptoms and pain. Getting a "second opinion" may help you feel more confident about your care.

Seek out information.

When learning about your health problem and its treatment, look for information that is based on a careful review of the latest scientific findings published in medical journals. Read about what strategies others have used to cope successfully and improve the quality of their lives.

Decide on a treatment plan.

Work with your doctor to decide on a treatment plan that best meets your needs.

As you go through this process, keep in mind that research shows that patients who are more involved in their health care tend to get better results and are more satisfied. □



Read for Your Health: Nutrition Labeling

The old advice to “**read the fine print**” is still good.

Luckily, the fine print in the grocery store, the Nutrition Facts panel, is easy to read and well-organized.

Have you ever patted yourself on the back for eating something whose label proudly stated “Only 70 calories per serving!” and then discovered to your dismay that you had in fact just consumed three servings? In the blink of an eye 70 calories had just become 210.

Knowing how to read the Facts panel does not mean there is not a dizzying array of discrepancies when it comes to food labeling. While at times something marketed as “light” or “heart healthy” may in fact be low calorie and low fat, at other times the same description might be used for a product that just has less fat than the regular version, but still contains a high percentage of your recommended fat intake for the day.

The Nutrition Facts panel is where you find all this information at a glance. The total calories are listed first, followed by a listing of the calories from the macronutrients: fat, protein, and carbohydrate. The rest of the label then prominently lists other ingredients you may be trying to avoid, such as cholesterol, sodium, and sugar.

It is important to note that no matter how much food is contained in the package, the Nutrition Facts label presents the nutritional breakdown of the food per single serving. This is where food labeling can become potentially misleading. For example, while a can of soup lists that it contains only 100

Start here >

Check calories >

*Limit these
Nutrients >*

*Get enough of
these Nutrients >*

Footnote >

Nutrition Facts		
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)		
Servings Per Container 2		
Amount Per Serving		
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110	
	% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g		18%
Saturated Fat 3g		15%
Trans Fat 3g		
Cholesterol 30mg		10%
Sodium 470mg		20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g		10%
Dietary Fiber 0g		0%
Sugars 5g		
Protein 5g		
Vitamin A		4%
Vitamin C		2%
Calcium		20%
Iron		4%
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.		
	Calories:	2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g 80g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g 375g
Dietary Fiber		25g 30g

*< Sample label
for macaroni
and cheese*

*Quick guide to
% Daily Values:
5% or less is low
20% or more is high*

calories per serving, close inspection shows that each can contains nearly three servings. Considering that most of us might think a can of soup contains just one serving, it is easy to see how we can unknowingly pick up unwanted calories, fat, sodium, and sugar if we do not pay close attention to the label.

Another important measurement on the Nutrition Facts label is the “Percent Daily Value,” which helps you see if a serving of food is high or low in a certain nutrient. Interpreting this measurement is fairly straightforward. For example, if the label shows that one serving of a certain food contains 25 percent of the recommended

daily amount of sodium, you can interpret that it is a high sodium food and adjust your food choices later that day.

The lower half of the Nutritional Facts panel identifies how dense in nutrients a food is. When you know that a food provides a high amount of key nutrients, such as protein, vitamins, and minerals, it makes the decision to add that food to your diet an easy one. □

